



Opportunities for hydrological research in the context of the European Community's research, technological development and demonstration activities

P. Balabanis

European Commission, Directorate General for Research, Brussels, Belgium

panagiotis.balabanis@ec.europa.eu

Water has been a major component of successive European Union's environmental research programmes. Over the past 30 years, many interdisciplinary research teams, supported in the context of these programmes, have successfully collaborated in increasing the understanding of the water cycle and in developing suitable observational capacity, technological solutions and decision support systems towards a more knowledge based approach to water resources management. The recently adopted 7th framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities open new perspectives for hydrological research. For the first time this programme aims to support investigator-driven research with a view of enhancing the dynamism, creativity and excellence of European research. Hydrology, an interdisciplinary science at the frontier of knowledge would certainly benefit for this new action line. Emphasis is also given in the 7th framework programme, in strengthening and stimulating researcher's mobility and fostering mutually beneficial research collaboration with researchers from outside Europe. This will certainly strengthen the international dimension of European hydrological science. The new framework programme aims also to optimise the use and development of existing and new research infrastructures of pan-European interest. Opportunities for the development of an efficient network of hydrological observatories, river basin networks and databases, which would provide easily accessible high quality data from various representative catchments of different scales and covering a wide range of physical, chemical, ecological and socio-economic conditions, would be also arisen in this context. Finally, the cooperation line of the 7th framework programme will provide support

to trans-national cooperation across the European Union and beyond, in a number of thematic areas including environment and climate change research. The environment theme recognises that hydrology is a vital component of the earth system and stresses the need to increase the scientific understanding of the interactions and feedback of the hydrological cycle at all scales, to further support European water and global change related policies.